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ABSTRACT

Discussion of speech instruction in bilingual education for deaf children refutes the assumption that speech is acquired automatically by hearing children and examines a program in which deaf children are taught alongside hearing children. The first part looks at how speech functions and how children acquire it: including the nature of the linguistic sign and its occurrence in the speech process; the speaking subject's role in the speech process; the newborn's ability to communicate, pre-verbal and verbal communication; and the mother's role in child language acquisition. In part two, the idea that deaf and hearing children have more similarities than differences is explained, and deaf children's right to a mother tongue is argued. Prejudices against deafness and the relationship of a child's deafness to parent(s)' deafness is discussed. Part three describes a pilot bilingual education program involving five profoundly deaf children and one severely deaf child, aged 4-6, that prepared them with both sign language and verbal communication skills for integration into a school for hearing children. The children's progress is followed through 6 years and the acquisition of written language in the bilingual education program is noted. Appended materials include data on the children, two manual alphabets, and a bibliography. (MSE)

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